

that she must be enduring, and, man-like, felt that she had wronged him by not being willing to receive his overture of peace.

"I will let Miss Bird see that I can live without her. Perhaps it is as well that she did not read it, after all."

Half an hour later Mrs. Dr. Glen rushed into her sister's room, exclaiming—

"Ollie! Ollie! Mr. Clayton has called for you to take a drive. I wonder where he has been these two days? He looks as if he'd had a fit of sickness. Do hurry, child; he seemed so nervous and restless. Here, let me tie your sash."

"Don't fidget, Jen; you know I can not bear to be hurried."

"You're a regular old maid. Oh, where is that cordial? Here, take a little to wake you up; you look dumpish."

Feverishly Frank Clayton watched the door through which the girl would enter, wondering what influence she would exert over him in his present state of mind. His imagination was so filled with a vision of a queenly figure and face of warm, proud beauty that he gave an involuntary start as the petite creature tripped in, her pretty pink and white face twisted into a frown at a refractory glove that would not lace right; but the frown turned to smiles as she raised her eyes to his face, and blushing prettily, said—

"I thought you'd forsaken me, and was just teasing doctor and Jen to let me go home to auntie."

"I—forsake you? Never! And now, which way shall we go? 'Tis a lovely morning for a ride in any direction. The country is beautiful."

She indicated her choice, but it made no difference to him, as, after he had driven slowly past the Bird residence, apparently all attention to his pretty companion, he cared nothing for time, direction or distance.

His anger cooled rapidly after this unmanly proceeding, and his companion's sallies fell on deaf ears for the most part.

"Why, Mr. Clayton!" she exclaimed, at last, with a becoming pout, "You don't hear a word I say or answer a single question!"

"Excuse me, Ollie; I guess I am poor company, but some business perplexities make me absent minded and dull."

Mrs. Glen was surprised to see them home so soon, and more surprised still when Ollie burst into a storm of tears.

"He was just as cross and stupid as he could be!" she exclaimed, petulantly, between her sobs. "Says business bothers him, but I am sure if he cared one bit for me he could afford to forget business for a little while after being gone so long."

"Nonsense, Ollie! Why, you know the doctor is cross as a bear sometimes, when things are going wrong outside. You must not expect it of a man."

"Teddie was never cross to me," wailed the girl.

"Well, maybe you had better give up trying to captivate Mr. Clayton, go back to the country, marry Teddy Sykes and settle down on a farm!" was the sarcastic rejoinder.

Suddenly Ollie sat up, and brushing the damp curls back from her flushed face, exclaimed, tragically—

"Jen, if I really thought Teddie cared for me as I do for Frank Clayton, I would go home and marry him, farm and all!"

Mrs. Glen laughed, mockingly.

"Lucky you don't often take such conscientious spells. But how about Miss Bird, whom everyone says Clayton is engaged to. He evidently can not marry you both. Don't you pity her, if so be you hold the winning card?"

"No, I don't; and isn't it funny? Some way I just feel a kind of spite at her, and if I could do anything to get him away from her—the proud, haughty thing! We drove past there this morning, and I think I saw her in the shrubbery; anyway, there was some one out there in white."

"Good! That augurs well for our side, and you must play your cards as fast as is safe, for the doctor does not remain here much longer; and by next year, when we return, your adored Miss Bird will probably be Mrs. Frank Clayton."

"Never! She shall never have him!" cried the girl, vehemently, adding later, irrelevantly, "Jen, why didn't you marry one of the other kind of doctors? I think these specialists, always on the move, are horrid."

"It may prove a good thing for you, sister mine, if you fail to catch the lawyer," replied Mrs. Glen, dryly.

Days and weeks passed, yet Frank Clayton had never met Blanche Bird face to face since that memorable morning, and now rumor said she was going to Boston to study music and oratory. She had special talent for both; and this going east to pursue them had been a pet scheme of her early girlhood, but she had given it up to wait for Frank Clayton. With herself she had reasoned that as the wife of a poor man the money would do more good than would her accomplishments.

Clayton's attentions to Ollie Older were of so spasmodic a nature that the sisters were alternately in a state of joy and fear. Dr. Glen, growing tired of such "blamed nonsense," left Oakland for San Jose to meet his next engagement, but the ladies still lingered, Mrs. Glen finally declaring her intention of remaining until after the holidays.